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The Woods in Winter.

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THROUGH LIFE'S SHADOWS.

BY ELIZA F. POLLARD,

Author of "Robert Aske," "Not Wanted," "Yvonne St. Claire," etc.

"Ruth brought all he had asked for." *p* 3.

CHAPTER I.

"LIFE'S DAWNING."

"ALL alone, Ruth?" said a young man entering unannounced a handsome drawing-room in Park Street, the town residence of Richard Oliphant, the wealthy banker.

"Yes, Theresa has not come in yet, and Maria—well, I believe it is one of her bad days! I was warned off the premises by her maid when I ventured to go up to her rooms this morning. If, as people seem to say, half her illness is imaginary, it is very dreadful, for she makes others as well as herself miserable."

"Unfortunately hers is not an isolated case; there are many in the same state," answered Clement Morgan, seating himself on a low chair in front of Ruth's tea-table.

"How heartlessly you say it!" said the young girl.

"Not at all," he answered, looking up. "I think it a terrible misfortune for anyone to be thus afflicted, but we medical men see so much behind the scenes; and you know quite well, when my father told your sister there was really nothing wrong with her, she was deeply offended, considered he did not understand her case, and called in Dr. Fry. But never mind, I'm glad you are alone, Ruth; I came really to ask you if you thought you could manage to go to the boat-race next week."

"With whom?" asked Ruth, rather demurely.

He laughed. "Do you think I should plead another man's cause?" he asked.

"It would make no difference, you or another," answered Ruth; "from henceforth the fiat has gone forth, that unless properly chaperoned, I am not to appear in public; and so, as your mother is at Eastbourne, Clement, and Theresa hates boat-races, I am doomed to stay at home."

The young man looked annoyed. "Give me a cup of tea," he said piteously; "it is a great bore."

"It is," acquiesced Ruth, as she poured out the desired beverage, and quietly took up her work, whilst her com-

panion leant back in his chair looking at her. She was pleasant to the eye, not strikingly good-looking, but tall and lithesome, with a clear, bright complexion and a mass of dark chestnut hair; her whole appearance denoted energy, strong vitality, and power of enjoyment. These two had known each other all their lives. Clement Morgan had just taken his M.D., and Ruth had left school six months before, being a little over eighteen. Somehow they had met most days since, and both families viewed the intimacy with complacency. "Ruth might do better for herself," Theresa observed to her father. To which he answered, "They can't marry for two or three years; Clement must get into practice first, and I have no objection to keeping Ruth at home."

It was the very fact of having to make a position for himself which had kept Clement silent. Dr. Morgan had a large family—ten sons and daughters—and Clement was the eldest. "If you marry a girl with money, I will take you into partnership," his father had said, "but I cannot give you a sufficiently large share of my income to allow of your marrying on it." Therefore it was that Clement hesitated. Should he accept his father's offer, or be independent and set up for himself? It hurt his pride, having nothing, to marry a rich girl. But this afternoon he was thoroughly annoyed. Suddenly putting his cup down he rose, and standing before Ruth said:—

"I can't hold out any longer, Ruth; you know I love you, you have always known it, and, well—I think you care a little for me. I want you to promise to be my wife, not now, of course, we must wait until I have a home to offer you. The fact of my being a poor man has kept me silent, but if our intercourse is to be restricted, let the matter be settled at once; let it be understood we are engaged to each other, then it will be plain sailing. I cannot live unless I am free to come and talk with you as my best friend, and it seems that I am to be kept at bay, lest the world should think I were trifling with you—the last thing I should dream of doing. I have always thought of you as my little wife. Shall it be so, Ruth, dear? Do you love me well enough to trust yourself to my keeping?" and he bent over her trying to read his answer in her face; but Ruth looked quickly up at him, her face slightly flushed, and answered without hesitation, simply and firmly:—

"Yes, Clement, I never have, and never shall, care for anyone but you."

"Thank you, dearest," said Clement, touched by her simplicity and willing surrender of herself, and sitting down beside her he drew her head down upon his shoulder, kissing the upturned face for the first time.

"Oh, Clement," she exclaimed, blushing rosy red; but he only laughed—such a glad, triumphant laugh.

"You have given me the right," he said, and she did not deny it, and so they sat hand in hand, perfectly happy, so tranquil and so restful, with a sense of union such as they had never felt before. Why should they feel disquieted? They had nothing to fear, they anticipated no opposition to their wishes; they had but to wait a year or two for their happiness to be complete, and in the meantime they were free to see each other daily—almost hourly. What more could they desire? They were young and free from care; they had but to live and enjoy life to the full. There was not a cloud visible in the whole length and breadth of their horizon; the sky was blue and the sun shone with promise. They were very happy—seldom had life dawned so brightly for two lovers.

"I will come to-morrow and speak to your father, dearest," said Clement. "I wish I were a rich man and could ask him to give you to me at once; but I hardly think he cares to part with you so soon; you are his darling, and I fancy I shall be all the more welcome for not taking immediate possession. He will be all the better satisfied to keep you a little longer. By-the-by, it struck me he looked very careworn the other day when we dined here. Is he overworking himself?"

"I am afraid he is, he often comes in late from the bank," answered Ruth. "I have tried calling for him in the carriage at the office; but he says it disturbs him when he has work on hand."

"Nevertheless, I should try and get him to shorten his hours; he is no longer a young man, and it is telling upon him. Well, I must be going," he continued, rising. "I have an appointment with my father at six. I think we'll manage the boat-race after all, even if I'm obliged to beg a holiday for little Kate. She'll surely do to chaperone you now we are a respectably engaged couple," and he laughed merrily.

Ruth laughed also as she said, "Fancy being obliged to promise to marry a man for the sake of a boat-race!"

"Anyhow, it had to be, sooner or later," said Clement, kissing her. "Good-bye, sweetheart."

"Good-bye," she answered, and smiling at each other, he left the room, and she, going to the window, watched him cross the street—both of them so calm and secure in their great happiness.

CHAPTER II.

CLOUD-LAND.

"FATHER'S late this morning," said Ruth, stretching across the breakfast table to reach a plate of scones. The remark was addressed to her sister, Miss Oliphant, the only person present besides Ruth herself, and she was so deeply engaged with a rather voluminous correspondence, that it was some seconds before she answered, and then she merely said carelessly,

"Yes, he is very late—so unusual for him. I wonder what he can be doing?"

"I know he is up and dressed," said Ruth, "because I met James taking a telegram to the study, and he said the master had been busy there ever since seven o'clock. I wish father would throw up business altogether. Surely we are rich enough?" she added.

"I suppose we are," answered Miss Oliphant, thoughtfully; "but in these days one really never knows. Still, at father's age he ought to be preparing for a better world, instead of labouring for the things of this world, which perish," and she heaved a little sigh.

"You don't suppose it's for himself he labours, but for us," said Ruth angrily. "What would Maria do without her carriages and horses, her maid and her pet doctor? What should any of us do if father were less good and generous?"

"Ah, well, poor Maria! I suppose father knows what he can afford. Still, he has made me very anxious lately. He was shut up in his study till past midnight, poring over accounts, and again the first thing this morning. It is too much."

"I'll go and see for myself why he does not come to breakfast."

Springing up before Miss Oliphant could make any observation, Ruth was gone. Possibly two minutes may have elapsed, during which time the elder lady resumed the reading of her letters, when she was roused by hearing Ruth's voice, husky and frightened, calling, "Theresa!"

"Well," she answered, looking up. Her sister was standing just within the door, white as a sheet, her lips

parted. "What is the matter, Ruth?" she exclaimed, starting up; but Ruth had recovered herself, crossed the room, and was pulling the bell with all her might. It was answered instantly by the man-servant.

"James," said the young girl, in the same husky voice, "fetch the nearest doctor; make sure he comes at once, and then take a hansom and go for Dr. Morgan. Be quick, my father is very ill. Theresa, come!" and, catching at her sister's hand, she almost dragged her out of the room, along the passage towards the study.

James, even whilst obeying her orders, had given the alarm, and they were joined by the housekeeper, several other servants appearing in the background. Ruth neither saw nor heard what was going on. She pushed open the study door and entered, followed by Theresa and Mrs. Markham.

"There," she said, pointing to the writing-table at which Mr. Oliphant was seated, his eyes wide open, fixed on the door, as if he were expecting someone to enter. The expression was of fear, intense, paralysing fear. He had evidently taken up his pen to write, but it had dropped from between his fingers. When his daughters entered, he lifted up his hands and waved them off.

Theresa stood still, horror-struck, but Ruth went up to him.

"Father, what has happened?" she asked, putting her arm round his neck.

For all answer he looked up into her face and laughed, such a strange, weak laugh. His lips moved as if he were making an effort to speak, and then he lapsed into the same position as they had found him in.

"Father, won't you speak to me?—don't you know your little Ruth?" No sign of recognition, the same dull, fixed stare. "Speak to him, Theresa, speak to him!" exclaimed Ruth, stamping her foot in her agony; but Theresa had thrown herself into an arm-chair and was weeping bitterly.

"Miss Ruth, do you not see he does not even hear you?" and the housekeeper laid her hand on the young girl's arm. "He has had some great shock," she continued; "you must wait till the doctor comes."

"Will he die?" asked Ruth, her white lips trembling with emotion, still keeping her arm round her father's neck so that his head rested on her shoulder.

"I hope not, I think not; it may be only a slight attack, but here comes Dr. Morgan, he will tell us." And in the doorway the tall figure of the physician appeared. His keen eye took in the position at a glance.

"You had better all go about your business," he said, in a quiet, authoritative voice, to the servants who were crowding in, "you can do no good here, rather harm;" and he gently pushed them on one side, entered, and was about to close the door when he saw James. "Remain outside, I may want you," he said, and then he went across the room to where Mr. Oliphant sat, quite motionless, leaning against Ruth.

"Where did you find him? How long has he been in this state?" he asked, after a rapid examination.

Ruth answered, telling all she knew. Dr. Morgan lifted the hand which still rested on the table, but it fell back powerless, the face also was gradually settling into a state of inanimate composure; only the eyes, wide open and fixed, retained a semblance of life. "We must lay him down," said the doctor, seriously. "Call James," he added, turning to the housekeeper. She obeyed, and the two men, lifting Mr. Oliphant, laid him on the sofa. "Now, you ladies had better retire," said the physician to Ruth and Theresa; "I will call you when your presence is necessary."

"Let me remain," said Ruth; "I am quite calm, and I can at least fetch and carry for you, doctor. Theresa, you had better let Markham take you to your room," she added, as her sister's sobs broke forth afresh.

The housekeeper took the hint and conducted Theresa to her own apartment.

"I think you are all right," said Dr. Morgan, patting Ruth kindly on the shoulder. "If you can find some old linen, and tear it into strips, you will be helping me; I must try what bleeding will do without further delay; some basins and water will also be needed." Ruth was gone almost as soon as the doctor had finished speaking, and then, with James's assistance, he partially undressed Mr. Oliphant, stripped up his shirt-sleeve, and drawing forth his case of instruments prepared everything for the operation, and when Ruth returned bringing all he had asked for, it was rapidly performed. But the result was not what he had anticipated. The blood flowed but slowly and was thick and dark. "I am afraid the attack must have taken place some time before you were aware of it," he said. "Who saw him last?"

"I did, sir; I brought him a telegram; it was eight o'clock," said James.

"And afterwards?" asked the physician.

"As he did not come in to breakfast I came to see what was the reason," said Ruth, "and found him in that condition; but he moved and tried to speak just before you came." The physician shook his head. "Is there no hope?" asked Ruth, her voice trembling with emotion.

"My dear child, as long as there is life there is hope," answered Dr Morgan; "but you have proved yourself so courageous that I think I may tell you the truth; I see little chance of saving your father's life; he may linger a day or two in this insensible condition, into which, notwithstanding our efforts, he has been gradually sinking, or he may have another attack and go off at once. We must try and get him into bed; will you send the butler and another man to help? Your father is too heavy for James and myself alone. Just see the way is clear, and his room ready."

With bowed head, and fast falling tears, Ruth obeyed, and when they had laid her father in his bed, she took up her place beside him and there she stayed, carrying out the doctor's orders, doing what she could in the vain hope that his life might still be saved. Theresa crept in once or twice during that long, tedious day, but she declared she could not bear it, it would kill her; as for Maria, she was not even told, and there was no wife and mother—Mrs. Oliphant had died when Ruth was a mere child. And so the young girl kept her watch alone. She had ever been her father's favourite, and since she had come home from school, his companion and friend. She alone could coax him out on Sundays; and on week-days, when he returned from business, his first question was always, "Where is Ruth?" And now it was all over; he was slipping away from her and she would soon be fatherless. As she sat watching the motionless figure, a great sadness, almost amounting to fear, crept over her, and the question arose in her heart, had she been a dutiful daughter? Had she striven her best to make her father's life pleasant to him? Could not she have drawn him away from that life of business which had so engrossed him, and brought him nearer to God? Surely she might have striven more earnestly than she had done; now it was too late, the time was up, and the dear familiar face would

soon be seen no more; the voice which had never spoken to her save in cheery, kindly tones would be silenced for ever. She tried to realise it and could not. She had, of course, heard of death, she had necessarily thought of it, but it had never come home to her. The solitude of that long watch oppressed her, he was so utterly alone, she could not go one step with him across the dark river.

"Oh father, father," she cried, laying her face down upon the hand which rested lifeless on the coverlet; but no responsive answer came to her, only the hard, irregular breathing fell like a death-knell on her ears, and she wept bitterly. All through that long day she sat beside him; people came and went softly, but she never forsook her post; they brought her food, and she took a little because she knew it was the right thing to do. The housekeeper and Dr. Morgan tried to persuade her to rest when night came, even Theresa came to her and told her she had better come away as she could do no good; but she refused. "She was not tired, she could not sleep," and she thanked God all her after life that she had remained beside her father to the last. Mrs. Markham sat in a large arm-chair in the room and slept; James lay down in the dressing-room. Towards morning she felt the hand she held grow cold in hers, and over the face a grey shadow fell. "It is coming," she thought, a strange fear creeping over her, as she knelt beside the bed and prayed. The sound of her voice roused Mrs. Markham, who hurried to the bedside just in time to hear one long, deep-drawn sigh; then all was still.

"He's gone, Miss Ruth, dear, he's gone, you must come away."

Obediently Ruth rose, stooped and kissed her father, passing her hand lovingly over the grey hair, and then she allowed herself to be taken to her room, like one walking in a dream.

It was about five o'clock on the following day when Clement knocked at the door in Park Street; and upon James opening it, stepped into the hall, saying in a low voice, "Show me into a vacant room, James, and tell Miss Ruth that I am here and desire to speak with her."

There was no hesitation, no doubt in his voice; he knew she would come to him though her heart were breaking.

"Very well, sir; will you step this way, the dining-room is unoccupied?" Noiselessly James threw the door open, and Clement entering, went and stood on the hearth and gazed dreamily into the fire.

He was fresh from an interview with his father, which had been very painful to both.

Dr. Morgan had informed him of the utter ruin of the Oliphants. "He must have speculated recklessly," he said; "for the credit of the bank was good, there was no heavy call made upon it. The clerks themselves could hardly believe it possible when they were dismissed yesterday morning with no explanation further than 'the bank is closed from inability to meet the claims upon it.'" Naturally Clement's first thought was for Ruth. "What will become of Mr. Oliphant's daughters?" he exclaimed, "at least, of the two elder ones? As for Ruth——"

"Surely, Clement, you have not been such a fool as to compromise yourself with Ruth Oliphant?" said his father, interrupting him.

"The day before yesterday she promised to be my wife," answered Clement, in a low voice; "not immediately, of course, but as soon as I should have a home to offer her; but now the tables are turned, she is poor, and has no home. I cannot leave her out in the cold, father; it must be my care to make a home for her as soon as I can."

"Not with my consent," answered Dr. Morgan, sternly. "I shall not stand quietly by and see you commit social suicide. To marry Ruth Oliphant under present circumstances would be utter folly! You must give her up, Clement, if she does not of herself break off her engagement."

"You need not fear, father; Ruth will set me free, you may rest assured of that; only—I may as well tell you at once—it will make no difference, as far as I am concerned; I shall never love another woman, and consequently I shall never wed any other. We may have to wait longer than we thought, but if my life be spared, and hers also, be it ten years hence, I shall still ask Ruth Oliphant to be my wife; sooner if I can."

"For her own sake as well as for yours I hope she will be the wiser of the two. How do you suppose she is to live on nothing a year for ten years, whilst waiting for you? Let us hope she will find a husband; some man who can afford to take a poor wife—you cannot."

Clement turned away feeling how utterly useless it was to attempt arguing with his father, who neither could nor would understand him. It was necessary to see Ruth at once, so without further delay he walked rapidly to the old familiar house in Park Street, which he had left only the day before with such a light heart, little dreaming of the cloud which already overshadowed its inmates.

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RESTLESSNESS.

I KNOW of nothing in our day more painfully and surely indicative of the interior wrongness of our life than the inability everywhere manifest to rest and be quiet. No life was ever healthy and strong in which there was not a central rest, and something to support and feed that rest. But in our day the question, "What shall I do next?" is asked before we have well finished that which went before. And so much of our activity is blind and purposeless. It is merely wasting and consuming time. There is no virtue in it, and no intelligence in it; consequently no profit. Life does not become purified or strengthened or enriched or made happier thereby. It is simply squandered. Now, all this is not simply wrong; it is foolish. It is not simply harmless activity; it is the activity that comes from internal hollowness of nature. We congratulate ourselves on being the most "alive" people in the world, which means, in plain English, the most restless. But mere restlessness has no inherent virtue or goodness in it. It simply denotes the possession of vitality, which vitality may be altogether uneducated and untrained. In every useful life there must be internal rest. There must be something believed in so firmly and so continuously that it holds to itself the mind and the heart. Therefore it is that the apostle says, "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable."—*Reuen Thomas, D.D.*

A NEW YEAR MESSAGE.

THE old year with its flowerets fair,
Its briers on the way,
Is passing, passing—and the air
Is sweet with solemn lay;
A midnight sigh for hours that die—
A joyful natal hymn,
The New Year bright is born to-night,
Amid the shadows dim.

Beloved! what shall be thy lot—
The secrets of thy fate—
Thy mortal vision knoweth not,
Nor what of changes wait;
But be of cheer this watch-night hour,
And this assurance take—
Thy God will choose life's thorn or flower,
Nor will His help forsake.

No good thing will His heart withhold,
Oh, rest thou in His care!
His strength thy weakness shall enfold,
And guard thee everywhere;
Oh, shrink not from the hours to be,
As fleets this year unknown—
The Lord who loves eternally
Shall never leave thee lone.

His smile shall bless each gladsome day,
And hallow scenes of light—
His tender hand will wipe away
Thy tears through lingering night.
And if ere yet the year shall fade,
There rings the call above,
Break forth to joy! the vale of shade
Is sunlight in His love.

No sorrow can thy path befall,
But Christ thy Lord shall know—
The Feet that trod earth's briers all
Before thee gently go;
For thee, for thine, oh, fear no ill!
But, sweetly trusting, sing
"The Lord shall choose my portion still,
Unto His strength I cling."

And should the tempter weave a snare
Of doubtings round thy way—
Victorious in Jehovah's care,
Triumphant day by day,
Know thou no storm of life can shake
His kindness Who hath said
He will not leave thee nor forsake—
Oh, be thou comforted!

M. S. HAYCRAFT

SINGULAR MODES OF SALUTATION.

PRIMITIVE nations have no peculiar modes of salutation. They know no reverences or other compliments. A Greenlander is highly diverted when a European uncovers his head or bends his body before one whom he regards as his superior.

The Philippine islanders take the hand or foot of him they salute, and with it gently rub their faces. The most familiar form of salute in Lapland is a mutual rubbing of noses. At New Guinea a friend is welcomed by the covering of his head with leaves of trees.

An Ethiopian takes the robe of his friend and puts it round his own waist as a symbol of friendship. The Japanese host takes off a slipper to welcome the coming guest.

With the Turks the uncovering of the head is regarded as a sign of indecent familiarity. In their mosques the Franks must keep their hats on. The wearing of hats by the Jews in their synagogues is doubtless due to the same ancient Oriental custom.

When two negro monarchs visit, they embrace by snapping the middle finger three times.

Barbarous tribes in olden days frequently imprinted on their salutations the traits of their character. Athenæus tells us that when the inhabitants of Carmena would show a special mark of esteem they would lance a vein, and present as a beverage to their friends the flowing blood. The Franks tore the hair from their heads and presented it to the person they saluted. The slave cut his hair and offered it to his master.

The Chinese are singularly affected in their personal civilities. They even calculate the number of their reverences. If two friends meet after a long separation, they both fall on their knees and bend their faces to the earth two or three times.

There is in China an institution known as the Academy of Compliments, the ritual of which prescribes the rules of polite society. There are determined the number of bows, the expressions to be employed, the genuflexions, and the inclinations which are to be made to the right or the left hand, the salutations of the master before the chair where the stranger is to be seated (for he salutes it most profoundly and wipes the dust away with the skirts of his coat); all these and other things are noticed, even to the silent gestures with which the guest is entreated to enter the house. The lower class of people are equally nice in these punctilios; and foreign ambassadors pass forty days in practising them before they are enabled to appear at court.

J. C. T.

"A SUCCOURER OF MANY."

IN these days of rush and hurry, when young hearts complain of weariness and young faces bear witness to the fact, it is an intense relief to turn to an older generation and learn something of their secret of rest. Such a relief comes to the readers of a book lying close to our hand at the present moment, "The Life and Letters of Mrs. Sewell."* It shows us the picture of a woman who could afford to wait till her sixtieth year before giving her best work to the public; who at the age of eighty was still her husband's and child's devoted nurse and companion; and at eighty-one "turned to begin her life again," and so far from being a burden to others, sought only to offer a helping hand to those in need.

The writer of the well-known ballad, "Mother's Last Words," had no thought of literary fame in her youth. She seems to have passed through a severely practical childhood, judging from the frequent changes in the family fortunes. She idolised her father, and the little portrait of him she hands down to her grandchildren might well serve in many respects for her own. "He had excellent talents and wide views; he was far-sighted and clear-sighted . . . full of enterprise and quiet enthusiasm; a most humane, tender and compassionate heart; indignant at wrong and oppression, and prompt to right the injured. . . . There was an elasticity, buoyancy, and promptness peculiar alike to his physical, mental, and moral nature." He certainly was the strongest influence in her life.

Both parents belonged to the Society of Friends, but Mary found their silent services remarkably tedious, and in latter years beguiled the monotony by repeating whole volumes of poetry learnt by heart during the week. Moore, Southey, Byron, Scott, all were food for her young eager mind. Yet, when at what may be called the spiritual crisis of her life, she found it necessary to withdraw her membership, she did so with many pangs; to the last retaining their quaint manner of speech. Anything that touched those with whom she lived touched the very apple of her eye, and though she was brave enough to cause the suffering thus inflicted she received the first brunt of the blow herself.

We must pass briefly over her childhood and girlhood, spent chiefly in Norfolk and Essex. The Wrights were a most united family, and their reverses do not seem to have greatly affected their spirits, until a final crash made a separation necessary. The girls were obliged to seek for situations as resident governesses, and for some time Mary filled the post of one in an Essex school; darning the pupils' stockings as well as teaching music and arithmetic, and living on familiar terms with the servants. It was at this juncture that a former suitor, Isaac Sewell, stepped in with renewed proposals, which were accepted without much enthusiasm on the young lady's part. She was married at twenty-two years of age, and at eighty-four writes, "a kinder husband or better father could never be found." The love might be slow in coming, but when it did come, proved faithful to the end.

The same reverses awaited her in her married life. We seldom read of prosperity. Change followed change, though her characteristic brightness only once forsook her—when they moved to London with their six-months-old baby, and

* Edited by Mrs. Bazley. Published by Messrs. Nisbet and Co.

tried business in a little passage leading out of Bishopsgate Street. She describes this experience in her book "Thy Poor Brother," and refers to it elsewhere in a few graphic words :—"I used to sit and look over the roofs of the opposite houses at the floating clouds and bits of blue sky, and cry like a child. Great London was to me like a huge cage with iron bars . . . want of fresh air, the high stairs, the noise, and the incessant work began to tell on me. In two years the business was broken up and so was I."

A move was made to a small house at Dalston, which seemed to her irritated nerves like Paradise regained. With only one little servant to assist her in the household work, all the washing done at home, and the two children, scarcely more than babies, always with her, the sole comment she makes is, "I think we were exceedingly happy." It was here that she wrote her first little book for children.

Home, literary, and philanthropic work were so blended together in Mrs. Sewell's life, it is almost impossible to disentangle the threads. The one counteracted, suggested, and supplemented the other. She certainly never "hurried Providence ;" any work undertaken by her came naturally in the course of events. Even of her writing she says, "I have nothing to be proud of—it all came in answer to prayer." Whilst at Dalston she became associated with Mrs. Brightwen in the Anti-Slavery movement, and in penitentiary work at Shoreditch ; and again when living at Brighton and at Lancing some years later she devoted a great part of her time to district visiting and other works of mercy. An account of her first visit to the Magdalen ward in the Brighton Workhouse speaks for itself :—

"The chaplain did not think it would be safe for me to venture there ; he hardly thought it safe for himself . . . he gave me alarming accounts of window-smashing, of fighting and swearing in this ward, and the governor and matron fully corroborated his statements. But I was not discouraged ; I had faith in the help of God, and believed that love would make its way all but everywhere . . . It was a large, bare, barn-like place, with no furniture but two rows of beds. 'Dear friends,' I said, 'I have heard that many of you are in trouble and difficulty. I have come to see if I can help or comfort any of you. I have been advised not to come ; it was thought you would not receive me well ; but I did not believe that.' An old woman instantly interrupted me, 'Oh, dear ! my lady, we would not molest you on no account, we are very glad to see you.' 'Come, then,' I said, 'let us sit down and talk together ; tell me your troubles, and let me see if I can help you.' They made a cluster round me in the centre of the room, sitting on the beds, and many a perplexed and sorrowful story did I learn from them, requiring, indeed, a friendly helper. After a long conversation, I read to them a portion of the Scriptures, and then they knelt down with me whilst we prayed God to help us all, and at their earnest solicitation I promised to come again. . . . I visited all the wards in the workhouse afterwards, but all my deepest interests lay in the bad one. More than once have I sat upon the floor with a culprit in the 'black-hole,' and found penitence more apt to follow upon kindness than upon correction."

Yet with all this depth of tenderness and sympathy, there was no false pity shown, no shutting of the eyes to sin as sin. "That's right, my dear, always hope," her father had said to her once as a child when reproved by her sister for a zeal not according to knowledge ; and this may truly be quoted as the keynote of her life, both for herself and others, "*always hope.*"

Years afterwards she writes to a friend, "Never let anyone leave you discouraged . . . we are too much afraid of praising people . . . life in this difficult world has great discouragements. I have met with many more people who need lifting up than taking down."

Her first prayer each morning on waking was that she might "know how to speak a word in season to the weary," and certainly her prayer was answered. It was during a quiet time at Wick, in the West of England, that she wrote "Homely Ballads," now in its fortieth thousand, and the "Children of Summerbrook" ; whilst ninety thousand of her "Stories in Verse" have been sold, her best-known ballad, "Mother's Last Words," beating the record of any poem of its class, its sale reaching one million and eighty-eight thousand.

The correspondence that flowed in after each publication was enormous, and must have kept her pen pretty busy. She composed most of her verses pacing up and down a long, straight walk. All that she wrote was for "the people," eagerly studied and welcomed in hospitals and prisons, in stifling garrets and lowly cottages. The miseries, wrongs, and sins she had witnessed burnt themselves in upon her mind ; the fire kindled, she could not keep it under.

The great trial of her life came through her only daughter's long and protracted illness. One hesitates to write the word "trial" in connection with Anna Sewell ; "an unclouded blessing—for fifty-eight years the perennial joy of my life," so her mother writes of her. Yet it must have been no light thing to that mother's heart to witness daily, hourly suffering, even though bravely borne, and for all outward token "her face not only sweet and peaceful, but often radiant."

An accident in childhood maimed her for life ; and after testing many different treatments and cures, the certainty came at last that nothing further could be attempted or done. "They no longer looked on every side for escape, but sat down by the side of their great trial and patiently learnt its deep and precious lesson."

"She could bear pain without showing it in her face or voice," Mrs. Sewell writes ; and far from falling into the fatal mistake common to invalid life, she occupied mind and thought as much as possible with interests outside herself. Self-pity was not in her, nor would she ever permit pity from others. Those who read her book, "Black Beauty," little think it was written by a chronic sufferer, the work and solace of the last seven years of her life. "It is written by a veterinary surgeon, by a coachman, by a groom ; there is not a mistake in the whole of it." Such was one of the comments passed upon it.

The weary fingers often refused to do the bidding of the active brain ; she would then write down her thoughts in pencil, and pass the paper on to her mother for transcription. That a connected work of any kind should be accomplished when for days together it was impossible torture even to look at a paragraph in a newspaper, is a marvel in itself.

Ninety-one thousand copies have been already sold, and by her pen she has won many victories in the battle against cruelty to animals. Truly might her mother say when the shadow of death drew near, "she has done her day's work in the day."

Mother and daughter went as far as possible together "through the valley in tender sunshine, until the end was reached."

"For ever with the Lord,
All tears wiped away."

Mrs. Sewell.

So Mrs. Sewell wrote to a friend one day at the close of April, 1878; the only words she seems able to find in which to express her loss. They had indeed lived their lives as one; the more so because Mr. Sewell's health had been failing for a long while, and his mental faculties suffering a sad eclipse. His wife was thus compelled to give out all to him, expecting little but the comfort of knowing how entirely he turned to her for support and consolation. He died in the November of that same year, a sudden return of his old brightness making his last hours radiant with a joy that knew no setting until he fell asleep to wake in a shadowless world.

Their only son, Philip, had married long before, and a grand-daughter came to brighten the lonely home.

But in spite of the heavy hours through which she must have passed, the brave spirit surmounted them all. It had always been her habit to look on the bright side, and this anchor did not fail her now. She used her energies and interests just as unsparingly as ever in the service of others. Day by day visitors would come for counsel and sympathy; they were never sent away disappointed. At eighty-four years of age she began a new recreation, broidering on satin, executing her own designs with mavellous skill. Her grandchildren also were constantly with her, "they must not find the house dull" was her great wish at this period.

"I know nothing about long, weary days," she says in a letter, "people think I must be dull! Why, I awake every morning with quiet joy, expecting the new mercies the day is sure to bring, and He never disappoints me."

Yet with all this, the mainspring of her life had in a measure snapped, and she writes on another occasion, "I have not got over my double loss, but I have become satisfied to live without it."

In November, 1881, a severe heart attack prostrated her; she rallied wonderfully from its immediate effects, but her health was never the same again.

Three years later she wrote her last little book, "Sixpenny Charity," and her last letter of sympathy to a friend in trouble; a fortnight afterwards the end came.

"I do not feel as if I were dying," she said, "only going into another room in the same house."

That morning, the 10th of June, 1884, she begged to be placed beside the window. There, with one last look out into the sunny garden, with the birds singing, and the flower-beds a blaze of colour, she closed her eyes, and the step into the other room of her Father's house was taken.

MRS. GORDON AND MRS. REID.

BY EDWARD GARRETT,

Author of "Occupations of a Retired Life," "John Winter," etc.

BOTH Mrs. Reid and Mrs. Gordon were old residents in the little Scotch country town of Durriff. Both had been early widowed. Mrs. Reid's husband had been an official on the railway till he met his death there. Mrs. Gordon's husband had been one of the laird's gamekeepers till his early death of pneumonia, contracted while sitting out in the woods watching for poachers.

Everybody in Durriff knew all about Mrs. Reid and Mrs. Gordon. They were both good women. But there are many varieties even of that sort!

To begin with, there was this difference between Mrs. Reid and Mrs. Gordon. Mrs. Gordon was always looked after and taken care of by everybody; but Mrs. Reid always looked after and took care of everybody.

This is a difference which runs all the way through a character, and all the way down a life.

In this case it meant that Mrs. Gordon did not have much to do with anybody but nice, kindly folks, and that even those she saw only on their best side. For instance, under the old laird's will, she was rent free, and had a little allowance besides. She always went up to the Castle to get this from the young laird's wife. The lady felt it quite a pleasure to supplement her dead father-in-law's pension with some gift of her own, some trifle of flannel or merino out of the big parcels she ordered from the great "Stores"

The Rival Grandmothers. [*Drawn by Percy Tarrant.*

in London. For this old dame was always so smiling and content, so ready with grateful words and pretty caresses for the Castle children, so different from the village matrons who often looked grimly at her carriage as it passed—because they wondered how they were to feed their own children and pay the rent—wondered the more because the money that was made in the village was nearly all spent in London, where the laird's family lived for eight months out of the year, and whence nearly everything was sent down to them during the four months when they stayed at the Castle!

Mrs. Gordon had nothing but praises for the Castle folk. It was pleasant to hear her, for it made one feel as if the world was full of beneficence and goodness, quite a soft and sunny place to live in! Everybody sang the praises of Mrs. Gordon. Everybody said, "What a genial, grateful old soul she was!"

And so she really was. Mrs. Gordon might be weak and foolish. She did not think enough to know how not to be selfish. Is that a hard saying? Nay, it takes a great deal of wisdom and consideration to be able to see that, though we may be getting what we want, others are not getting their bare rights, and to remember, when the world is easy enough for ourselves, that it is very hard for some other people! But there are many people who have quite as little self-reliance as Mrs. Gordon, and quite as little strong helpfulness, who are grumbling and envious and spiteful into the bargain. At least, Mrs. Gordon wished everybody well, though it never occurred to her that their well-being might be part of her own business.

When there was any trouble she kissed one, and called one "a poor dear," and reminded one that "the Lord would provide."

And so He does. But He reaches us by means of some sort. He reached Elijah by the ravens, and He reached a great many people by the hands of Mrs. Reid. Was there a serious accident, or a sudden death, or an outbreak of disappointing wickedness in a decent household, there was Mrs. Reid brewing a cup of tea, making a comfortable bed, setting the place in order, doing everything that remained to be done.

Nobody ever expected anything from Mrs. Gordon, for everybody knew she had nothing but what was given her. She made no secret of it (and that was sweet of her, for some people are quite as dependent, and tell fibs to conceal it!) She said God provided for her as He did for the sparrows, and so everybody threw her a crumb!

But all knew that Mrs. Reid was "comfortably off." She had saved money in service before she married. Then during her married life, having one child and much leisure, she had continued to exert herself as a skilled needlewoman, consequently her married life had more savings. Her husband's life had been insured, and during her earlier widowhood she had successfully carried on the trade of dressmaker, which she had only given up when her eyesight failed. She must have quite enough to live on. Yet she still knitted stockings, and people thought it rather greedy of her! Nor did she always give anything when the "collectors" called on her.

How was anybody to dream that Mrs. Reid, out of her own hard-earned money, spent on herself far less than did Mrs. Gordon, with her pension and her gifts; and that, not because Mrs. Reid was still saving, but because every penny that she did not need for simple necessaries always found some good use for somebody else?

Little helps rendered to the very young, or the very old, the dying, the stranger, or the erring outcast, are good deeds which are not published abroad in any market place, but they are surely recorded somewhere. Perhaps we shall be very surprised some day to see against whose names some of these accounts stand largest! Perhaps keen and wise eyes might have detected these sacred accounts in the lines of Mrs. Reid's strong, sensible face. But keen and wise eyes are not so common in this world as to be likely to abound in Durriff. Durriff decided that Mrs. Reid was a shrewd, worthy woman, a little hard perhaps, a serviceable person, but proud and shut in to herself—not a woman to care much for affection.

Most women best like those other women whom they can call "poor dear." Not even Mrs. Gordon had ever called Mrs. Reid "poor dear!"

Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. Reid were very good neighbours, they were both too worthy not to be that. Mrs. Gordon would gladly have been on friendlier terms. But Mrs. Reid kept up an intangible barrier, saying to herself that people who lived very near each other must not be too intimate, unless they were agreed in most things.

For the old ladies really lived under one roof. They resided in an old up-and-down sort of cottage, with red tiles, in the older part of Durriff, hard by the ruined chapel among the ancient graves. The little cottage had once, probably, been occupied by one family, but now it was broken up into two "houses," one opening on each side of the little entry. They took off the entry door in summer because it made the place more lightsome and airy, and in winter they put it on again to defend themselves against the wind and snow.

Each little "house" consisted only of a living room, a bed-closet and a low draughty loft under the red tiles. Mrs. Gordon had never ascended the ladder into her loft. Mrs. Reid had slept in hers several times, on occasions when she had given up her own bed to somebody who was sick or sorry, or even to a guest, for Mrs. Reid had one or two old friends who sometimes came from a distance to see her.

Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. Reid shared the amenities of their little washing green, each using it on definite days, which Mrs. Reid had caused to be specially stated when they entered on their joint tenancy. "As if one day would have mattered more than another to me," said little Mrs. Gordon; "I'm sure you'd always find me ready to make myself obliging."

But Mrs. Reid was firm. Then she asked if Mrs. Gordon meant to keep poultry. Mrs. Gordon thought she would like to keep a few hens, if Mrs. Reid would like to do the same. "Why, there was room for both, sure-ly?"

Certainly there was room, but Mrs. Reid was thinking of keeping two or three geese, and perhaps a duck. A little stream at the bottom of the garden made that quite convenient.

This was how Mrs. Reid prevented all trouble about eggs or chickens, or so forth. When she wanted a hen's egg for breakfast she bought one from Mrs. Gordon. When she thought Mrs. Gordon's appetite was not very good, she gave her a duck's egg "to her dinner."

That is the sort of woman Mrs. Reid was. And she did not always speak smooth things. Also, she had a dreadful silence, worse than the severest words. One can understand this in a woman like her. You see it depends upon yourself to be grateful, and certainly Mrs. Gordon did her part there. But it does not wholly depend upon yourself whether you receive gratitude; and in her determination to give everybody "a chance," Mrs. Reid had sowed kindness in some quarters where gratitude was little likely

to come up. She would have said stoutly that one should not look for gratitude. But it does not make one think any better of the world when one does not find it.

But while these two women were living so near together, and yet so carefully separate that there might be no clashing interests between natures so essentially different, there was being woven between them a tie so close that whatever touched the one, must, in some way, thrill the whole being of the other.

Mrs. Gordon's daughter, who was in service in the nearest seaboard town, married Mrs. Reid's son, who was chief engineer on a steamer trading to and from that port and the southern capital.

Mrs. Gordon was in ecstacies. She told everybody how her future son-in-law had invited her to the wedding, which was to be from the house of the bride's mistress, and how he had sent her a grand new shawl to wear on the occasion. It was such a good match for Sarah, she said, for the bridegroom had money in hand to buy a house all out, without borrowing; he'd always had good salaries, and "nobody that needed anything from him." Mrs. Gordon declared it was just a blessing on Sarah's dutifulness; for Sarah had always spared her mother all she could from her little wage, so that she had never been able "to put by." Said the neighbours, what a dear happy woman Mrs. Gordon was, and how ready always to look on the bright side of things.

Mrs. Reid said nothing. In her own heart she felt that this was not her choice—at least, if Sarah was to be like her mother. "But it's Robin's own affair," she decided. "Each has his own mind to make up, and the rest must take what comes."

She did not go to the wedding, but she sent a little square carpet for the new parlour.

Her son had always written to her every week. She knew letter writing must cost something to the busy man; and those letters of his were the dearest things she had. She always kept the last in her pocket through the day, and under her pillow at night, and only put it away among her stored treasures when the next one came.

And her heart grew sick and sore with the feeling that now perhaps these letters would grow few and far between. —"Or he'll get his wife to write for him; he'll think that will do as well—and I'd as lief have nothing," she thought, growing bitter in the pain. But the letters came the same as before, week after week, month after month, year after year.

In time there were one or two children. The first was a little girl. Both the grandmothers were asked up to the christening, and again Mrs. Gordon went, and again Mrs. Reid stayed at home.

"She's the wife's mother," she mused. "That's a different thing. The wife and her husband's mother are generally best friends when they're apart. I've seen that over and over again, and why should it be different in my case? She'll want to give the babe her mother's name—it's her own name, too—and it's but natural! It's only the old Adam in me that keeps saying they might have asked me to give mine, and trusted me to have the grace to put it aside for Mrs. Gordon's! What can such a feeling be but the very pride that Christians ought to keep under."

And Mrs. Reid's resolute efforts to keep it under in herself made her go about very stern in the face, and very crisp and decided in manner.

But Mrs. Gordon came back with a whole hamper of gifts from Robin Reid, and the marvellous news that the baby was not called Sarah, but Jean, after the paternal grandmother. "Was it likely it would be called after anybody else?" asked Mrs. Gordon.

Mrs. Reid said to herself, "Robin knew his mother, and that's why he said nothing beforehand. And Sarah is a good woman." She felt quite a glow about her heart. She was so glad to find only herself in the wrong!

There came a time when Robin Reid brought his wife and children to stay a while in Durriff. Mrs. Gordon rejoiced openly. Mrs. Reid rejoiced with trembling.

Did Mrs. Reid ever listen or pry when she heard Robin or Sarah come in, and leave something at Mrs. Gordon's door before they knocked at hers? Never! That did not trouble her in the least.

But when little Jean came to pay her morning call with the bunch of flowers which she and her "mammy" had culled from the little garden of the house where they stayed, why then Mrs. Reid crept up beside her open door, and stood there with quivering lip thinking—

"The darling must like Granny Gordon best. She'll take that from her mother; besides, Granny Gordon's got a manner which children must prefer to mine. I believe the little one is half afraid of me! And yet she's Robin's own, and it seems a little——hist!"

This is what she heard:

"I's got to 'vide my flowers, but there's only one bit of 'cherry pie,' and that's to go to Granny Reid, 'cause father says it's her favourite. And it's only fair she should have the biggest half, 'cos she's so much bigger than you are. I hope I'll be big, too. Mother says she hopes I'll be like Granny Reid. You don't mind me not being like you, do you, Granny Gordon? I can't be like both grannies, you see; you're so different."

"Bless the darling's heart!" cried Granny Gordon. "Be like your Granny Reid if you can, my dear, but it's a hard task you're a setting before yourself. She's worth ten of me!"

That was the first and last time that Granny Reid ever "listened." Her old face glowed with the shame of it. And when little Jean came forward, walking warily down the uneven brick steps, she was surprised and awed to see something like tears in Granny Reid's eyes. She kissed Jean again and again, and smelled all the flowers, but would only keep the little bit of heliotrope, and bade Jean take the rest of the nosegay to Mrs. Gordon, "with Granny Reid's love."

"I's given it to *you*, Granny Reid," said Jean, almost chagrined.

"Aye, love, you've given it to me, and so I can give it to somebody else," granny explained. "You've given me the pleasure of giving it, don't you see, little Jean?"

And Jean had to be satisfied.

"I see Mrs. Gordon has the best of it after all," said the brave old woman, facing herself in her quiet room. "I've never said a slighting thing about her; but if she could have listened at the door o' my heart, as I did at the door o' her house, she'd not have heard such good words as I heard."

The last evening of Robin's visit he spent with his mother alone; at least, Sarah and the children came up with him, but went away early. Sarah said she must put the children to bed, and she didn't return afterwards.

"Mother," said Robin, speaking with an effort, for he was reserved like herself, "we're always giving things to the other granny, poor body, for nothing comes amiss with her. But I know you've more than enough for yourself of the kind of things you want, and you wouldn't care for

flummeries. Yet maybe there's something you'd like—it isn't fair that just because you've done so much, nobody should do anything for you."

"I've not done much," said Mrs. Reid, considering. "But still—to please you—there's one thing I'd like. There's a poor orphan boy in Durriff that nobody's looking after. Could you get him taken on your ship, and just do any little thing for him that happened to turn up? It wouldn't be a charity," she added, from her characteristic standpoint, "for he's a good lad, and will be worth his salt. There's plenty of charity going—but this is the sort of thing that is often let pass."

Next morning that boy left Durriff with Robin Reid, and at this time (for my story is some years old) he is second mate on a big whaler.

On the following Sunday Mrs. Gordon went to church in a new bonnet her son-in-law had given her as a parting gift.

It chanced that the minister's text was, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's."

It was a discourse on the duty of considering the fitness of all things, and of putting them in their right places and to their right uses.

And in the church sat two women, both content and thankful.

Each had been fed with "the food convenient" to her nature.

JOHN TURNER'S LITTLE MAID.

A Village Tale.

BY JETTY VOGEL.

I REALLY could not say how many children there were in John Turner's little cottage. There were many of his name in the village, and it was always as "Turner with the large family" that he was described. And they were all boys but one, a lot of rough, unmannerly cubs, with torn clothes and muddy boots, shouting and tumbling about the place, always on their father's hands, none even of the elders keeping a place for more than a week or two (though the farmer with whom Turner worked would now and then give them an odd job for their father's sake), and the younger ones always playing truant from school, and bird-nesting, or in some other mischief. A heavy handful they were for a poor labouring man. A widower, too, for his wife had died some five years before—leaving their one little maid, a baby of a few days old—worn out, poor woman, with muddle and children, though not with the fair, honest, household work that would have prevented the muddle and hindered the children from being the plague they were.

But the little maid: she was of a different sort from her brothers. A little, clean, sweet-faced, mannerly thing, that never gave any trouble, either to the different women who looked a bit after her, or at the infant school, where she went as soon as she was old enough to toddle there. It was a great comfort to poor John Turner's heart, which must often have been sad enough, to think that for those five hours, for five days in the week, his little maid was safe. He would have been glad if there had been Saturday school also, so as to have had her safe for another day; and so, too, would many a village mother who had her children all about her feet on a Saturday, thinking all the time if it were not for that she would have cleaned up her place a bit for the Sunday, never remembering that schoolmasters and mistresses are human like themselves, and want their breath of fresh air and freedom on a Saturday, after toiling with the children all the week. I am a schoolmaster myself now, though I was then only a pupil teacher, so I ought to know. But the little maid. One or other of the children going to the infant school would call for her, and off she would go, as happy as a kitten, with her piece of bread, or perhaps bread and dripping, for her dinner. She would be back about five, just as her father came home from the milking, and would sit on his knee, with her arm round his neck, sharing his poor tea, and making it the brightest hour of the day for him, with her innocent chatter and pretty loving ways. In the summer evenings when he went to work at his allotment in "Poor Man's Patch," he would take her with him, running prattling by his side (though it was often asleep in his arms that he brought her back, with her pretty head on his tired shoulder), and there he would make her a nest with his ragged coat on an old tree stump in the hedge; where, after she had played about a bit, and amused herself with pulling up a weed or two, which she brought in triumph to her father, she would settle down, chattering as gaily as the little birds going to roost in the hedge beside her, till she too dropped off to sleep. I verily believe that to have her there with him helped her father more than if two or three of the boys had come to work with him, as, indeed, they ought to have done.

There was one place where they were never seen together. The little maid was always with the younger scholars at church on a Sunday, but her father spent such part of the day as he was not at the milking, resting, as well as he could among the dirt and squalor of his poor home, sitting on one broken chair, with his tired legs on another, and with the rickety table beside him covered with slops and fragments of bread. It might have rested him more perhaps if he would have gone to church and heard something there to help him a bit through the week; but he had no heart to clean himself up and go, and so the weeks went drearily on, the little maid the only bit of sunshine in his life.

At last there came one July day when the little lass was not waiting at the door to welcome her father home; but he for once willingly forebore the sight of the little dancing figure and sweet little face, with its flaxen curls under the pink sun-bonnet. The children had all gone to the school-treat, held every year, as soon as the hay was carried, in the large water meadow across the river. Poor John was glad to think that his little maid was having a bit of pleasure, and hastened back to finish up his farm work that he might be ready to meet her when she should return with the other children.

Back they all came, marching along with flags and wreaths and posies of meadow-sweet and willow-herb. As they came in sight from the Bridge road, the bells struck

up in the old grey church tower overhead, and the children shouted, and some of the parents who were there waiting for them under the churchyard wall shouted in answer (they never went further, because you see there was the penny toll to pay for crossing the bridge), and altogether there was a merry din. I, as pupil teacher, was walking with the children, and remember well noticing John Turner, as he stood a little apart from the others, not cheering or shouting, but watching with a hungry look on his sad, eager face as the children passed by. The little ones went first, that they should not be hurried or jostled, and as I came behind with the boys it flashed across my mind to wonder that he had not seen and claimed his little maid. The children were marched to the school-house just across the road from the church, where they were each to have a bun and a glass of milk, and the Vicar and his sisters were there to see after and dismiss them. Tired out they must have been, for they had been in the meadow and the life of everything the whole afternoon. The children were sent away a class at a time, the little ones first, and their shrill hurrahs were heard outside as they departed.

Only about a dozen of the elder boys were left in the room, and we were glad, thinking that our labours would soon be over, when, just as the clock was striking eight, John Turner burst into the room. He looked round as if he were scared, and then sank upon a bench and put his hands before his face. Our Vicar was beside him in a moment, with his hand upon his shoulder like a brother, saying, "What is it John? What is it? Let me help you."

John lifted his face, all white and scared, with haggard, bloodshot eyes. "My little maid, sir," he said, "my little maid. I can't find her nowhere."

"But she's at home, John, long ago," said Mr. Rae. "I sent her there myself with her brother Tom."

At that moment he glanced round, hearing some sort of a scuffle, and there was Thomas Turner himself, trying to slip out of the door unseen, behind a group of big boys who were sheltering him. Mr. Rae had him by the collar in no time, and dragged him forward, howling enough to bring the roof down.

"Where is your sister?" said he, and "Where is my little maid?" cried poor Turner in a breath; but the boy only roared and dug his knuckles into his eyes, and protested that he "didn't know nothing."

Mr. Rae explained that he had found little Nellie in trouble. She had fallen down, and torn and muddied her frock, and lost one shoe. He had found her shoe and put it on for her; but, as she still sobbed and cried and seemed over-tired, he had hunted up her brother Tom, and desired him to take the little maid home, and this he supposed he had done. But Turner had been to his desolate home, where

"The children had all gone to the school-treat."

was no little maid; and gradually Master Tom was induced to confess that he had taken his little sister to the gate of the big meadow, and putting her outside into the lane, had told her to go home, thus considering that he had fulfilled his duty towards her, while he, with a light heart, went back to the field and the games.

When he had got to this point, "We must go and find her," said Mr. Rae. "You come too, Morris," added he to me, and I was glad enough to go, although I was well tired out, for, besides being sorry for poor Turner, and, like all the village, fond of little Nellie, there was not a thing I would not have done for Mr. Rae, and to be along with him; and that is how we all felt who had anything to do with him.

First we went to the Bridge House, and there Mr. Reid patiently questioned the woman who took the tolls. "I've lost one of my little lassies," he began; "can you tell me anything of her?"

The woman declared so many children had been passing over the bridge that afternoon that she had lost count altogether, and could tell nothing of any single child. She was a new comer, and did not know little Nellie Turner by sight. At last, when Mr. Rae had pressed her a good deal to try to remember, and had described the child's dress and appearance, the woman suddenly burst into tears, and confessed that between half-past five and six a little girl such as that had come to the bridge, but that she would not let her pass through because she had not a penny to pay the toll; nor, as she was alone, could she tell whether she was one of the school children who had passed through that afternoon by contract. She had gone back over the bridge crying, the woman said, and I heard poor Turner mutter in a heart-wrung tone, "My little maid."

But where was she now? The river, swollen with the July rain, and running so swiftly under the arches of the bridge, was in all our thoughts, but we could not speak of it. She was certainly not in the field, nor in the lane leading from the bridge to the field, or we should have met her; and she had not passed over the bridge, by the woman's telling.

The lane from the bridge was crossed about half a mile from the river by a road running at right angles, with a large village about two miles along to the right, and a smaller one a mile and a half to the left. There was also a hamlet, at about the last named distance, going straight on from the cross-roads. Mr. Rae decided that we should each take one of these roads, looking under every hedge where the child might have fallen asleep, questioning every person we should meet, and inquiring at every house; and that we should meet again at the bridge. Happily the evening was long and light and fine, being but a month after midsummer. At once, without a question, Mr. Rae started off at a swinging pace up the longer road, leaving Turner and myself to take the two shorter ways.

It was about an hour later when we met, empty-handed, at the bridge; and the light had died out of the sky, and the hope out of our hearts, when we did so. Poor Turner looked dumbly at Mr. Rae for orders; and he, resolutely, if not cheerily, said "Then we must search the river-bank. I will go up the stream, and you and Morris down. She must be on this side the river, as she did not cross the bridge;" and so saying he turned towards the gate by which the little maid had left the field.

Turner had scrambled through the hedge opposite without waiting to go to the gate which on that side was higher up, and I was just following, when a hoarse cry burst from him, "My little maid!" but it was not the hopeless tone which had wrung our hearts the last two hours. He crashed down the bank, and through the bulrushes that filled a little back-water beside the bridge; we followed him, and there under the first low arch of the bridge, fast asleep at the higher end of an old half-submerged punt, still clasping her withered posy of meadow-sweet and willow-herb, lay the little maid. The full moon had just risen above the low eastern hills, and shone upon her face, which till then must have been hidden by the shadow of the bridge.

Not a word was spoken beyond the Vicar's deep "Thank God!" as John Turner raised the sleeping child, and clasping her, oh, so tenderly, in his arms, laid her head upon his shoulder, and mounted back again to the road, this time through the gate, which I held open for him; and we tramped silently along the lane. When we reached the bridge the Vicar held out his arms saying, "Let me take her now, John, you are tired." But the poor fellow answered him with a sob, "No, sir, 'tis my little maid that was lost, I cannot spare her." After that we crossed the bridge in silence.

The Vicarage was just opposite the church; when we reached the gate John Turner paused and seemed about to speak, but Mr. Rae said, "Go on, John, I will be with you directly, wait for me, Morris," and went in. In a minute or two he was back with two jugs—he must have desired Miss Rae to have them ready—and giving me one, he carried the other himself, and we caught up John Turner just as he reached his own cottage door.

The tired man sank down upon the settle, still with his little maid asleep in his arms. Her pink sun-bonnet had fallen back, and her pretty fair hair was all limp and uncurled with the heavy dew, and her face stained with tears. It was dark in the cottage, but Mr. Rae had matches, and the little lantern we all knew so well going about the lanes in the winter evenings. He lit it, and then pulling off the child's damp shoes and stockings began to rub the little cold feet and hands. At his desire I helped in this, till presently she opened her eyes. Then Mr. Rae found a cup, and pouring into it some hot milk out of one of the jugs, bade John feed the child with it. John himself he made drink some soup out of the other jug—soup such as he had never tasted, and which seemed at once to put some life into him. Then he knelt down on the clay floor, and I beside him, while, in a few words, he returned thanks for the mercy of that evening in the restoration of the lost child; and standing up, he said, "We shall see you in church to-morrow evening, John, to give thanks yourself; now put her to bed—" for the child was again dozing off in her father's arms—and he left the house, I following him.

In a village like Ashley a thing is soon known, and the next day, Sunday, there was not one who had not heard of the loss and finding again of John Turner's little maid; and the notion having got abroad that he was to return thanks at evening service, every seat was full betimes. In a seat under the reading desk, usually empty, there he was, with his little maid in his arms. He sat still with bowed head throughout the Psalms and prayers, but when before the general thanksgiving the Vicar gave out that John Turner desired to return thanks to Almighty God for the preservation of his child, at a sign from Mr. Rae he stood up for a moment, and the sun shining through the open western door just caught his grizzled head and the pink sun-bonnet on his shoulder. Then he and all the congregation knelt, and more than one sob was heard during the following prayer. I saw the woman from the toll-gate weeping bitterly. She seemed never to have left off crying since she learned that the child had been lost through being turned

back by her for want of a penny. The hymn that was sung before the sermon was,

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold."

And the text of the sermon was, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." Hymn and sermon together, we felt throughout the church as one man, as the Vicar described the Good Shepherd seeking the lost sheep, and the joy when the lost was found. He did not say a word about what had happened the evening before; but it was in all our hearts, and we knew that it was in his heart also; and it made us understand better than we had ever done before the Love that endured so much to seek and save the lost.

I went away the next day for my holiday, and only remained at Ashley till the next Christmas; but as long as I was there, there was never a Sunday evening that John Turner failed to be in church, in that particular seat, with his little maid. He got, as time went on, to look a bit brighter and happier, poor man; but as for the little maid, I don't know how she could possibly have looked happier than she had always done.

BISHOP HANNINGTON AND THE CHILDREN.

One of Hannington's favourite fictions with regard to himself was that he had no patience with children, especially babies. "Oh, my gracious; there's that baby again," he would say to the indignant mother, when his latest arrived nephew or niece was brought in for his inspection. Or when paying a visit to another sister-in-law, whose husband he was about to join in some distant Mission work—"Well, now, I suppose I must see the *baby*" (with an indescribable intonation on the word baby), "or its father will be asking me questions about it which I can't answer."

But whatever the mother may have thought of this profession of indifference to her offspring, the children themselves were not to be so deceived. They knew better. No one was more popular in the nursery than Uncle James. The very children in the village would creep up close to him and beg for bull's-eyes as he passed. And as for babies, he loved as much as many another man to feel their soft little fingers clasp around his own—when no one was looking! In a letter to his wife, he writes of the baby of the day: "*You may kiss his little dear face for me.*" A man who did not love children never wrote such an expression as that. "His little dear face!" The baby-face must have been in his mind, all dimpled and soft and fresh for a kiss, when he wrote the words.

Several years later, after his consecration to the Bishopric, while narrating some of his African experiences to a congregation at Bath, he made the following statement, than which I cannot recall any more touching in its tender simplicity:—

"When far inland, the mail comes in but once a month. Its arrival is heralded by two gun shots fired in quick succession. No matter what one may be doing, he leaves his occupation, and hurries forward to get a sight of his precious letters. There would be some, perhaps, from my brothers, some from friends, always one from my wife. But there was one which, when I saw the handwriting, I opened first. It was on a bare half sheet of paper, the lines running this way and that way; tumbled and soiled; but that one letter I read first and treasured it above all the others. *It was from my dear little son*, and contained but two lines: 'My dear father, God bless you.' These few words received by me in the wilds of Africa were more precious than many a longer letter."—*Life and Work of Bishop Hannington. By the Rev. E. C. Dawson.*

WHAT ALL BOYS SHOULD KNOW.

Don't be satisfied with your boy's education until you are sure that he can:

Write a good legible hand.
Spell all the words he knows how to use.
Speak and write good English.
Write a good social letter.
Write a good business letter.
Add a column of figures rapidly.
Make out an ordinary account.
Deduct 16½ per cent. from the face of it.
Receipt it when paid.
Write an ordinary receipt.
Write an advertisement for the local paper.
Write a notice or report of a public meeting.
Write an ordinary promissory note.
Reckon the interest or discount on it for days, months or years.
Draw an ordinary bank cheque.
Take it to the proper place in a bank to get the cash.
Make neat and correct entries in day-book and ledger.
Tell the number of yards of carpet required for your parlour.
Measure the pile of fire-wood in your shed.
Tell the number of bushels of wheat in your largest bin, and the value at current rates.
Tell something about the great authors and statesmen of the present day.
Tell what railways he would use in making a trip from Penzance to Aberdeen.

If he can do all this and more, it is likely he has sufficient education to enable him to make his own way in the world. If you have more time and money to spend on him, all well and good—give him higher English, give him literature, give him mathematics, give him science, and if he is very, very anxious about it, give him Latin and Greek, or whatever the course he intends pursuing in life demands.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

We propose this month to give directions for making a lady's dress, hoping that some of our readers will be able to gather a few hints on this subject that will be of use to them.

The material chosen is Scotch tweed, of which eight yards will be required, also four yards of taffata for the skirt foundation, and two yards of lining for the body and sleeves. Three dozen buttons are used, as well as five-eighths of velvet for trimming.

We shall start by making the foundation skirt. For this the taffata is cut into three equal lengths, two of which are used for the front with a join down the centre, and one for the back, which has a small gore added, taken from the front widths.

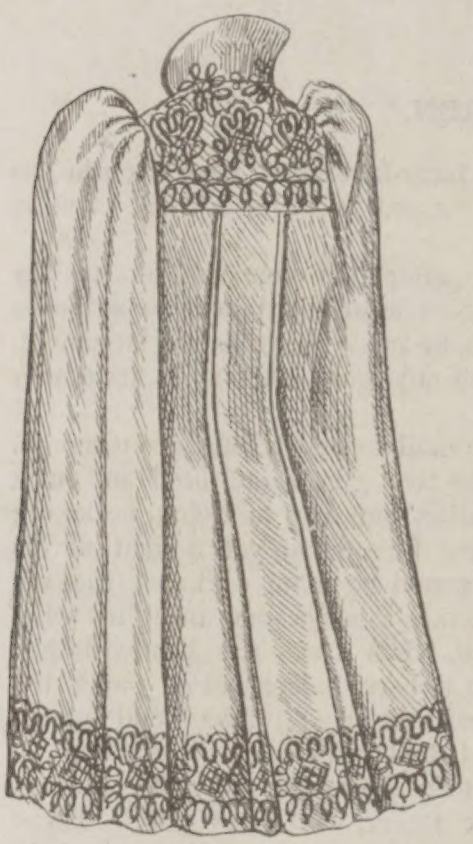

Fig. 1

When the seams are all joined up, the bottom must be faced on the right side with the material and bound with braid, while the waist is taken in to the required size with dart pleats in front and gathers at the back; it is afterwards set into a webbing band and made to fasten at the side.

Over this foundation the skirt material is fitted after the seams have been stitched and carefully pressed, and the bottom laid up with a hem, say six inches wide. This overskirt should be about two and three quarter yards wide, and should two widths of material be insufficient for this, a small gore can be added on either side of the front width and quarter of a width to the back. The front of the skirt is almost plain, and is made to fit the figure by three dart pleats placed about four inches apart, while the back is gathered very full and stitched to the foundation skirt. A narrow band of Italian cloth or webbing stitched over the join will make the skirt quite neat.

We shall next turn our attention to the body. Some of our readers may have an old dress from which they can take a pattern to serve as a guide to cut the lining from; but it is not always safe to trust to this, as an old dress sometimes gets twisted very much out of its original shape.

Perhaps the best way will be to send for a flat paper pattern, which will consist of front, and back, two side pieces, collar, under and top of sleeve, also the full piece for the same and the revers.

From this pattern the lining should be cut and carefully fitted. When the lining is correct, each piece should be tacked firmly to the stuff and cut out. All the seams need to be well tacked together before the machining is done, after which the body must be tried on again, as it is apt to be taken in a trifle more or less than was allowed for in the cutting.

Each seam should now be laid open and overcast on either side, while the fronts of the body are faced with Italian cloth, as is also the bottom. The under part of the sleeve is cut the same size as the lining, but for the upper part the material is cut longer and wider above the elbow to allow for the fulness which is gathered on to the lining. The bottom of the sleeve is arranged to button up about five inches. The collar should have a piece of stiffening laid between the lining, and the revers are also lined with a piece of stiff muslin. A waistband of webbing is stitched to the three inside seams at the back of the bodice and hooked in front. All the body seams can be boned, if desired.

Fig. 2.

While we are writing on this subject, perhaps we ought to inform our readers that gored skirts lined throughout, and used, of course, without a foundation, are fast coming into fashion. Most of us will feel more comfortable in the present style than in the loose, flowing skirt, such as was worn twenty years ago; but there is no doubt that this change will become general in the course of time.

Our illustration, Fig. 1, shows a lady's three-quarter mantle, which is made about a yard long below the square yoke. A fancy braiding ornaments the bottom of the mantle and also the yoke. Thick winter cloaking, which can be bought in almost any colour, and in a variety of patterns, is suitable material for this garment, and it will require about two yards and a half.

Fig. 2 illustrates a little girl's dress suitable for a child from six to eight years of age. The pattern is a neat, useful one, and very easy to make.

A V-shaped front of velvet is used for the bodice, and the material gathered on each shoulder and at the waist falls over this; velveteen is also used to trim the skirt, and for the cuffs. This dress will take about three yards of double width material, and one yard of velveteen.

Fig. 3 shows a pretty little pinafore, which can be made in plain or fancy muslin or diaper; a yard of the latter will make one large enough for a child of eight.

Fig. 3.

Flat pattterns can be supplied of the dress described, 6½d. each, in two sizes, viz., 24 to 26 inches in the waist, or cut to measure, 1s. each. Figs. 1 and 2, 6½d. each. Fig. 3, 4½d. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.